

COMPANION CATS SHOULD BE INDOOR CATS

Keeping your pet cat safe and healthy indoors is important. **The City of Millville** wants to help you to do this with these tips. House cats can lead a contented and full life within the confines of your home. Even if you live on a quiet street and believe that your cat won't go far from home, there are dangers that can threaten your cat's health and life. It is not cruel to keep a cat indoors; it is actually the best care you can give your cat.

The first and most important step to having a contented house cat is spaying or neutering. This will eliminate the drive to get out of the house to mate. Being that the drive is very strong, a cat can be relentless around any barrier you set up and finding a way out. Your cat should be fully vaccinated according to your vet's advice. Although you may be taking all precautions to keep your cat inside, it may only take one trip outside to expose your cat to some very serious diseases.

Cats are naturally curious and playful. Satisfy these needs with a variety of toys, some that you share with your cat and some that your cat can play with alone. Some cats really enjoy chasing a yarn ball, a wind-up mouse, or a laser pointer. Even an empty paper bag can bring hours of fun. Make the toys more attractive by sprinkling catnip, an easily grown mint, on them once a week. If you have a sunny windowsill, grow catnip indoors or grow it outside during the summer and dry it for use all year. Catnip is available for purchase at pet stores and in some health food stores.

Many cats love to watch the world go by. Provide a place where your feline friend can look out the window. Pet supply stores and online sites offer cushioned window seats that easily attach to your sills. Some cat lovers report that their pets respond to moving images on the television set. There are also cat 'treehouses' with several perches that your cat can climb onto for a better view of its domain.

Some cats are fussy about food. If this describes your feline friend, try out different foods until you find one that satisfies. If your cat is on a strictly dry food diet, make sure it drinks enough water to prevent dehydration and urinary crystals. Some cats won't drink from a bowl. Fountains and bubblers are available that may be more attractive to your cat. If your cat will not drink water, supplement its diet with wet food.

One of the least attractive habit of cats might be scratching on furniture. Scratching is an instinctual behavior that many animal experts think is a form of communication, leaving their marks on trees and other objects in the environment. If your cat likes to scratch, provide a homemade or purchased scratching post. You can make one by securing a piece of carpeting to a wooden post.

The urban and suburban world is not a safe place for cats. Vehicles, poisonous chemicals, dogs, and other cats present a great danger to your feline friend. Antifreeze that may have spilled on a driveway is a very attractive, sweet poison. Some cats carry FIV, the feline equivalent of AIDS, a highly contagious and incurable disease. The only prevention for FIV transmission is to keep your cat indoors. Feral cats can be very aggressive and hurt your pet. Humans can also present a threat. Cats have been grabbed off the streets and brought to labs or sold to dog fighters as bait. Further, there are those with an aversion to cats. They think that they are evil or easy targets and hurt them for no apparent reason. Do yourself and your companion cat a favor. Create an indoor space that is a home that your cat will not want to leave. You will both be happier for it.

For more information on the benefits of keeping a cat indoors visit

<http://www.peta.org/living/companion-animals/caring-animal-companions/caring-cats/indoor-cats/>

<http://www.americanhumane.org/animals/adoption-pet-care/caring-for-your-pet/indoor-cats-vs-outdoor-cats.html>

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